DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 323 833 HE 023 813

AUTHOR	Glazer, Judith S.
TITLE	Education for the Disadvantaged: The Higher Education Opportunity Program in New York State.
INSTITUTION	State Univ. of New York, Albany. Nelson A. Rockefeller Inst. of Government.
PUB DATE	85
NOTE	19p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Marketing and Public Relations Dept., Rockefeller Institute of Government, 411 State St., Albany, NY 12203 ($2.00).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Viewpoints (120)
JOURNAL CIT	Rockefeller Institute Reprints; n18 p1-10 Fall 1985
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Affirmative Action; *College Admission; *Compensatory Education; *Disadvantaged; Educationally Disadvantaged; Higher Education; *High Risk Students; Low Income Groups; Outcomes of Education; *Program Effectiveness; Program Implementation; Remedial Instruction; State Programs; Student Educational Objectives; Student Financial Aid
IDENTIFIERS	*New York

ABSTRACT

The article examines the impact of New York State's Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) after 13 years of implementation at 70 institutions, focusing on the effects of participation by underprepared, low-income students. Considered also are college admission and enrollment policies, academic support services, and budgets. The study analyzed results of questionnaires and interviews with 37 HEOP program directors, as well as data from annual reports of the State Education Department and participating colleges. Positive findings included HEOP's clarity of mission and well-defined student population; the heightened awareness achieved by compensatory programs and availability of financial aid; and more efficient and imaginative coordination of federal, state, and institutional funding sources. Eight recommendations address the need for continued funding of opportunity programs, replicating programs and services that improve achievement, more systematic efforts in working with public schools to improve college preparation, utilization of the literature on instructionally effective schools, and development of studies to obtain follow-up data on HEOP alumni. (DB)

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Education for the Disadvantaged: The Higher Education Opportunity Program in New York State

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Number 18
Fall 1985

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Reprinted with permission from *Integrateducation*, Vol. 22 (January-June 1984), pp. 11-20. Published by the Horace Mann Bond Center for Equal Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

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$1.00

Education For the Disadvantaged:

The Higher Education Opportunity Program in New York State

Judith S. Glazer

Formulating Education Opportunity Policies

Programs for economically and educationally disadvantaged students in New York State gained impetus through a series of statutes approved by the legislature and the governor between 1964 and 1970. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s had led to several federal initiatives to provide access and opportunity for Blacks and Hispanics in public and private colleges and universities (Leslie, 1977; Green, 1982). "Higher education became the chosen vehicle of American social policy" as increased minority participation was to move previously excluded ethnic and racial groups into the mainstream of economic life (Astin, 1982, p. 124).

New York State's opportunity legislation was initiated in the public sector. College Discovery and SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge) were established in 1964 and 1966 respectively, in response to pressures from civil rights leaders in New York City, at the City University of New York (CUNY). The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) took shape in 1967 at the State University of New York (SUNY), which also established urban centers to provide nondegree technical skills training for out-of-school youth and adults who lacked even the most basic skills for entry level jobs (Knoell, 1967). In 1969, the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) was initiated in the private colleges and universities of the state through a system of annual contracts with a newly organized Bureau of Higher Education Opportunity Programs within the State Education Department (SED). This bureau was also charged with coordinating all opportunity programs and reporting annually to the Board of Regents, the state's highest policy making body for all levels of education.

In 1970, state social policy took another step forward with passage of the Full Opportunity Program (FOP), extending open admissions to all community colleges under a new funding formula, and authorizing the resources for initiating open admissions policy at CUNY in Fall, 1970. The state now sought to utilize "the strengths of the private sector, community and senior colleges of the public systems, special remedial programs, financial aid for students based on need, urban centers, and other innovative techniques" (Rockefeller, 1969).

Much of the literature on minority access has focused on the Black student in higher education, tracing the rationale for equity programs and the impact of desegregation policies on enrollment patterns (Preer, 1981; Wilson, 1982); the persistence of Blacks in postsecondary institutions (Thomas, 1981); and the results of efforts to increase participation of Blacks in graduate and professional schools (Blackwell, 1981). An excellent study assessing the impact of Black enrollments on 13 public and private midwestern institutions found that leadership was the key variable in the change process (Peterson, 1978). Peterson notes that there have been few recent studies on the degree to which students and institutions were affected by the implementation of policies responsive to Black demands, and no systematic investigation of the impact of minorities on higher education after a period of quiescence.

In the most comprehensive study of the impact of college on students, Astin looks at a range of outcomes affected by the types of colleges which students attended as well as environmental factors unrelated to

Adapted from a paper presented at the AERA Annual Meeting, Montreal, 1983.

college attendance (1977). Few studies assess the effects of participation by students in programs for the disadvantaged at private colleges and universities, taking into account the factor of institutional selectivity.

In this article, I examine the impact of New York States's HEOP program after 13 years of implementation at 70 institutions, focusing on the effects of participation by underprepared, low income students and on the colleges they attended in terms of admission and enrollment policies, academic support services, and budgets. I identify issues related to program impact and continuance and offer recommendations and an agenda for the future.

Legislative intent for HEOP, EOP, and SEEK were essentially the same: 1) to provide higher education opportunities for state residents who are high school graduates or have the general equivalency diploma, have potential to complete successfully a college degree, and are both economically and educationally disadvantaged; 2) to offer these students special services such as screening, testing, counseling, tutoring, and remedial, developmental, and compensatory courses; and 3) to give supplemental financial aid for books, tuition, living expenses, and personal maintenance.

Economic and educational disadvantage were defined as follows: 1) economic disadvantage was based on family income adjusted to number of household members for the year prior to the student's admission. In 1981-82, 87 percent of HEOP students came from households with incomes under $11,500; nearly 30 percent came from families receiving social service benefits; 21 percent were independent. 2) Educational disadvantage was defined as "inadmissible by normal standards at each campus" to overcome the distinctions between selective and nonselective institutions in a state with 109 private colleges. More aid was offered where large numbers of high risk students were admitted to encourage their enrollment.

HEOP took the twin predictors of academic success in college—high school grade point average and achievement test scores—and asked that other factors be weighed in admitting students with academic deficiencies. It offered financial incentives to lower barriers for admission to colleges which, in many instances, were symbols of wealth, class, ethnicity, and other status variables. By modifying merit criteria as a basis for state support, it sought alternative strategies for predicting academic success and compensating for individual handicaps. This program preceded by one decade the advent of direct student aid under New York's generous Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) which now provides $300 million in aid to state residents attending CUNY, SUNY, and the private colleges in New York State. In an era of reduced resources and tightened academic standards, it is timely to assess the impact of HEOP and to consider what remains to be done in the 1980s under very different environmental circumstances and changed public perceptions about the role and purpose of higher education.

Data Sources

Two kinds of data are used: 1) questionnaires and interviews with 37 HEOP program directors; and 2) cumulative data derived from annual reports and unpublished sources of the SED and participating colleges. The questionnaire was field-tested in interviews with 11 program directors, and a more structured version was mailed to 63 program directors, eliciting a 42 percent response. Interviewees were asked to measure the impact of HEOP on a scale of 1 to 4, noting whether the program had no effect, little effect, moderate effect, or significant effect in 7 categories related to institutional policies and student outcomes. Their responses are incorporated into the findings.

Nine of the programs responding were in New York City; 33 were distributed throughout the state. In all of these programs, directors have been associated with HEOP from one to 12 years with the median at three; 19 are male, 15 are female; 19 are Black, four are Hispanic, nine are white, and two are Asian. Seven universities, 19 liberal arts colleges (5 denominational), three junior colleges, and five special programs are included. One program is part-time, 20 are residential, seven have a special mission to broaden access to the professions, two are minority colleges located in ghetto areas of New York City, and four are in prisons. They range in size from 20 to 420 full-time equivalent students (based on 12 credits per semester) with a median enrollment of 66.

Impact on Admissions

From 1972-73 to 1981-82, the majority of HEOP students scored below 380 on both the math and verbal sections of the SAT's. More than one-third scored below 320 on the verbal compared to an average of 25 percent on the math; 11 to 16 percent scored above 500 on the math compared to only three to five percent on the verbal. These data reflect a commitment to work with high risk students at the lower end of the spectrum, and the severe language deficiencies of even the most able HEOP students. To improve communication and reading skills, mandatory remedial courses are given during the freshman year; in only a few colleges, foreign-born students with poor linguistic skills are placed in bilingual courses according to program directors.

A recent College Board study on test scores of graduating seniors showed that in 1981, Black students scored an average of 100 points below white students on both the math and verbal SAT's 322V

and 362M compared to 442V and 483M (1982). The median income of white students taking the test was $26,300 compared to $12,500 for Blacks (the median income for Puerto Ricans was lower, $12,300). The study found a possible correlation between test scores and other factors such as family income and parental level of education. This disparity in scores, compounded by the fact that only the most able Black students took the test, points to problems which must be addressed if equity is to be achieved in admission to selective colleges.

The data on high school GPA's show a decline in the percentage of students with averages below 70. However, one-third continue to fall between 70 and 79 GPA, and another 25 percent are admitted with the GED or no diploma. Many of these are older adults who dropped out of school several years earlier.

To measure HEOP's impact on admissions policies, directors were asked whether changes in admission criteria for HEOP students had affected institutional policy in five categories: SAT scores, high school GPA, personal interviews, placement testing, and financial aid eligibility. The majority (61 percent) felt that changes in criteria for HEOP had little or no effect on these five areas. Those admitting large numbers of high risk and non-traditional adult students stated they did not use SAT's or GPA's in making admission decisions. Others stated they were used in addition to other measures. Those who noted little or no impact on overall admission policy felt this was a consistent pattern across all five criteria used. Most HEOP directors reported that modifying admissions policies was a gradual process handled jointly by the Admissions and Financial Aid offices in cooperation with HEOP staff. Seventeen directors report to the Vice President for Student Affairs or Dean of Students; 17 to the Provost or academic dean of the school housing the program; one to the Director of Minority Programs; and one to the Dean of Administration. All define academic disadvantage based on institutional criteria; several refer nonadmissible or rejected applicants to HEOP for review. While directors do not make initial decisions on applicants except in special programs, all are actively involved in recruitment and give the final approval on admissions. Fifty percent said they were responsible for financial aid packaging. Most agreed that "there are not enough measures of ability for underprepared students"; all weighed the personal interview as a key assessment tool, looking for evidence of high motivation, positive attitudes toward academic study, strong career goals, and realistic expectations of their capability to undertake four or five years of full-time study, particularly among older adults. Some use the California Achievement Test for placement; technical schools required evidence of aptitude in science, drafting, or fine arts; two admit students with eighth grade reading levels; one teaches all courses in Spanish; and prison programs accept students regardless of their HEOP status.

Impact on Enrollments

Since HEOP was designed to increase the number of minority students in private higher education, the extent to which integration has been achieved was analyzed. Directors were asked whether HEOP affected enrollments of minority students, nontraditional adults, high risk populations, and male/female distribution on their campuses. More than half felt that the most significant impact was in admission of minority students (80 percent) and high risk populations (81 percent). Ninety-one percent said it had little or no effect on male/female distribution of students and 64 percent shared that view regarding enrollments of nontraditional adults. Of the 7,138 students enrolled state-wide in HEOP in 1981-82, 54.7 percent were Black, 22.4 percent Hispanic, 4.0 percent Asian, 1.0 percent native American, and 16.2 percent white. This was a 7.6 percent increase in Hispanic and Asian students since 1974-75 and a 6.7 percent decline in Black students. Table 1 gives the distribution by sex, race, and ethnicity in the past three years based on actual enrollments between 1979-80 and 1981-82.

Table 1: Distribution of All HEOP Students By Race, Sex, and Ethnicity, 1979-80 to 1981-82

	Male(1)		Female		Total	
1979-80	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.
Black	40.3	1,592	59.7	2,362	56.8	3,955
Hispanic	42.3	639	57.7	871	21.7	1,510
Asian	42.8	92	57.2	123	3.0	215
Native Am.	16.9	13	83.1	64	1.0	77
White	47.5	533	52.5	589	16.1	1,122
Other	33.0	31	67.0	63	1.4	94
	44.5	3,096	55.5	3,865	100.0	6,961
1980-81	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.
Black	41.0	1,500	59.0	2,156	54.0	3,656
Hispanic	45.0	737	55.0	899	24.2	1,636
Asian	49.3	106	50.7	109	3.2	215
Native Am.	25.8	17	74.2	49	1.0	66
White	50.2	537	49.8	532	15.8	1,069
Other	30.5	39	69.5	89	2.0	128
	43.4	2,936	56.6	3,834	100.0	6,770
1981-82 (2)	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.
Black	40.4	1,593	58.5	2,247	54.7	3,840
Hispanic	45.2	710	54.9	862	22.4	1,572
Asian	46.0	128	54.0	150	4.0	278
Native Am.	28.9	22	71.1	54	1.0	76
White	48.8	554	51.2	582	16.2	1,136
Other	30.4	34	69.6	78	1.6	112
	43.3	3,041	56.7	3,973	100.0	7,014

Source: *HEOP Annual Reports* and Worksheets, 1979-80 to 1981-82.

(1) Male enrollments include 500+ in prison programs, approximately 18 percent of male enrollments.

(2) Boricua College figures not available for 1981-82.

Six factors emerge in analyzing the demographic data for the past decade: 1) the ratio of Hispanic and Asian students to Blacks has increased; 2) in actual numbers, Hispanics have increased 1½ times; 3) the number of Black students has increased by 450 although the percentage declined relative to other groups; 4) the ratio of women to men is higher in all groups; 5) the percentage of male students in prison programs is 18.2 percent of all male HEOP students; and 6) the program has become more ethnically heterogeneous.

The rationale for enhancing equity of opportunity to a range of disadvantaged groups can be conceptualized into two broad categories: incentives and sanctions. As Blackwell observed, the major intervening variable has been institutional behavior (1981, p. 40). Nationwide, access and opportunity programs have expanded "horizontally" to include more minority groups, especially Hispanics, Asians, and women (Preer, 1981). While the percentage of Blacks enrolled in colleges has quadrupled between 1970 and 1975, the major increase has been in community colleges (Egerton, 1982, p.9). HEOP's initial constituency was mainly Black. However, program expansion has led to greater recognition among high school guidance counselors, potential students, and community agencies, resulting in greater ethnic and racial diversity among applicants. State incentive aid for increasing enrollments of "new immigrant groups" has led to more active recruiting by HEOP directors and staff members. As low-income populations in urban high schools have increased, this recruiting function has accelerated.

There appear to be greater incentives for females to attend college through HEOP among the minority population. The paucity of male as compared to female students parallels findings at the national level, where Black females outnumber Black males in postsecondary institutions by 14 percent (National Center of Educational Statistics, 1980) compared to 15 percent in HEOP statewide. When the five male correctional programs are subtracted from the total, there are 22.6 percent more women enrolled in HEOP. In those universities which admit large numbers of high risk and nontraditional adult students, the ratio of females to males is 3:1 (75-25 percent distribution); for example, New York University and the Brooklyn Center of Long Island University.

Some tentative reasons are offered by directors: a lower percentage of male applicants, lower acceptance rate of males, and higher male attrition. Other factors may result from the discrimination which women encounter in the labor market, particularly without job training or basic skills proficiency. The U.S. Department of Labor data show that a man with an eighth grade education is likely to earn more than a college-educated woman. Many female HEOP students are also heads of households with one or more dependents, a group with a poverty rate which is twice that of their male counterparts (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1983).

Academic achievement of HEOP students has had a positive impact in increasing administrative support for compensatory programs and admission of high risk students. HEOP directors used phrases such as "word of mouth," "networks," and "ripple effect" to describe how potential students heard about HEOP and sought admission on their own initiative. The HEOP bureau has also recommended steps to expand minority access in technical and professional programs, providing incentive funds for this purpose. Blackwell's study documents the under-representation of Blacks in business, engineering, and the sciences (2 percent); and the fact that three out of four Black Ph.D.'s are earned in education and social sciences (1981).

There has been a decline in the percentage of Black and Hispanic students in HEOP in the past ten years as minority enrollments among regular undergraduates have increased in the private sector. Since HEOP began, direct student aid programs based on financial need were implemented. In one upstate university, 25 percent of HEOP enrollments are native Americans enrolled through outreach efforts of the HEOP staff. In the selective institutions, directors commented that only a small number of minorities would have been admitted without HEOP incentive aid, and that the success of these students led to recruiting more minority students. The number of HEOP minority students has grown by only 1,000, compared to an increase of 27,500 in non-HEOP minority enrollments (19 percent compared to 71 percent growth rate).

This can be attributed to four factors: 1) the initiation of federal and state entitlement programs of direct student aid through BEOG (now Pell grants) and TAP respectively which were implemented in 1973-74 and now have ceilings of $1,800 and $2,200 per capita; 2) the lack of requirements for providing regular minority undergraduates with costly special services such as HEOP necessitates; 3) the open-ended nature of entitlement aid compared to categorical grant programs which are limited in numbers of recipents based on annual legislative appropriations; and 4) the impact of sanctions related to equal opportunity compliance regulations, more difficult to measure than incentive aid, but necessitating responsible activities by institutions accountable to the federal government based on receipt of grants and contracts. Most state aid to increase access has tended to be general appropriations rather than categorical grants, a trend now being encouraged by the present administration.

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In its annual comparative analysis of opportunity programs, the SED points out that HEOP enrolled the largest percentage of Blacks while SEEK enrolled the largest proportion of Hispanic students. HEOP minority students were 22 percent of all private college minority enrollments compared to 28 percent in SEEK, 17 percent in College Discovery, and 45 percent in EOP (State Education Department, 1981). Directors also noted that changes in the applicant pool from public high schools, the main source of students, had an impact on demographic patterns. In New York City, where many directors from around the state recruit HEOP students, of 469,355 secondary school students in 1981-82, 40.5 percent were Black, 28.3 percent were Hispanic, 4.1 percent were Asian, and 27 percent were white. The 1980 census data show that in New York City, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians now make up 47.1 percent of the population, an increase of seven percent for Blacks, 10 percent for Hispanics, and 102 percent for Asians since 1970 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1983).

HEOP students have gotten younger in recent years. In 1981-82, 79 percent were under 26 years compared to 60 percent in 1975-76. Older students are more readily found in Schools of Continuing Education or General Studies. In 1975-76, 13.8 percent of all HEOP student were 30 years or older compared to 12.3 percent in 1981-82. Directors concurred that the 18 to 24 year old who is single with no dependents has a greater chance to succeed than the older student who may also have family and financial responsibilities and needs to readjust to academic study and campus life. Some directors mentioned the "culture shock" experienced by incoming students from urban public schools, particularly at upstate residential campuses. Budget constraints have meant that HEOP students are expected to work part-time through college work study and to obtain summer jobs. Many hold full-time jobs in addition to full-time study.

Impact on Institutions

In recent years, there has been interest in the lack of basic skills of entering freshmen and the kinds of programs and services that enhance retention and achievement. While remedial and developmental programs were initially shaped in the public universities, particularly in community colleges, even the most selective colleges now have expository writing centers, math anxiety clinics, and research skills workshops. HEOP provided incentives for private colleges in the state to develop their own versions of developmental studies, counseling, and other services, and according to the program directors, it is in this area that the program has had the greatest impact in changing institutional behavior.

Directors were asked to assess the degree of impact in seven policy areas identified earlier through field interviews. The most significant impact was perceived in access (50 percent) and academic support services (59 percent), two areas which the legislation was designed to strengthen; to a lesser extent, HEOP also affected student recruitment (27 percent) and financial aid policies (27 percent). A more differential and indirect effect occurred through affirmative action regulations (19 percent) and institutional mission (17 percent). No impact was perceived on residential housing. Directors commented that academic support services, in particular, are being institutionalized in recognition of the need for increasing basic skills proficiency of the majority of incoming freshmen. One director referred to HEOP as the "harbinger of change" on her campus in triggering assessment of freshman academic skills proficiency. The impact of ethnic diversification should not be underemphasized as it has caused previously homogeneous institutions to modify their academic and supportive services. HEOP programs offer mandatory pre-freshman summer sessions, tutoring, counseling, and developmental/remedial courses for credit and noncredit.

- Pre-freshman summer sessions are mandatory, sometimes residential, and last from four to eight weeks. The typical program includes instruction in basic math, writing, reading, science, and study skills. Pre- and post-testing are used for placement and evaluation. The completion rate in 1981-82 averaged 95 percent, an increase of 6.5 percent since 1975.
- Tutoring may be on an individual or group basis, is taught mainly by peer tutors or graduate students, and is often required for all freshmen. As a result of HEOP's success with tutoring, it is now available to all lower division students in several colleges, generally as part of a campus-wide learning resource center. In 1981-82, 3,998 HEOP students received 123,320 hours of tutoring, a decrease of 14.3 percent since 1975-76.
- Counseling is provided in 5 areas—academic, personal, financial, vocational/career, and psychological. Guidelines recommend one for every 26-50 students; several assign this role to the assistant director. One women's college invites parents to special orientation sessions to offer first-hand descriptions of the academic and cultural environment in which their child will participate during their four years of study. Counselors try to resolve problems before they become crises. In 1981-82, 6,796 students received 174,901 group and individual counseling hours, an average of 25.7 hours per student, a seven percent increase over the prior year (87 percent on an individual basis).

- Remedial/developmental courses are credit and noncredit generally given in the summer prior to entrance and in the first year. In some colleges, undergraduate remedial and basic skills courses open to non-HEOP and HEOP students are funded through the regular college budget. In 1981-82, 4,843 students completed one or more RDS courses (83 percent), a slight decline from the prior year.

HEOP directors were asked to note the degree to which these services had affected their students. The most signficant impact occurred in five services: tutoring (96 percent); pre-freshman summer session (88 percent); remedial/developmental courses (100 percent); academic counseling (96 percent); and study skills (92 percent). Little or no impact was seen in bilingual courses (81 percent) although some directors voiced a need to address this problem. Directors were also asked to what extent the academic support services offered through HEOP had affected non-HEOP students, that is, were now offered in the regular college budget. Half felt these services had a moderate impact; 31 percent termed it significant; and the remaining 24 percent felt it had little or no impact.

In summary, the major institutional impact has been in remedial/developmental studies, a field of instruction with which more selective private institutions had little prior experience. As academic standards are raised and the quality of preparation of incoming freshmen scrutinized more closely, remedial and basic skills courses are being implemented as part of lower division requirements. At times these are hidden under the rubric of study skills, learning resource, media, and writing centers. However, diagnostic testing and evaluation, the use of word processors and micro-computers, courses in critical thinking and communications are being offered to some degree to meet individual needs of diverse populations and to upgrade student achievement.

One upstate college has instituted a Supportive Services Program through which freshmen who are ineligible for HEOP are given conditional acceptances and channeled into a college-wide learning center. These marginal students receive the same services as HEOP students funded through the college's operating budget; after four years of operation, the college has found the survival rate is more than 90 percent for students entering with below average SAT scores and high school GPA's. All HEOP directors concurred that the needs of disadvantaged students have gained greater recognition and understanding on their campuses as a result of HEOP, and that these support services were "crucial" to student success in competitive environments.

Impact on Students

Of considerable interest is the impact of participation in HEOP on the students who enroll, particularly on those factors which differentiate successful from unsuccessful students. Astin identified a number of factors influencing educational progress, categorized under two major headings: "entering student characteristics" which included quality of academic preparation in secondary school, family background and socioeconomic status, and positive self-concept about academic ability, and "college environmental factors" such as institutional characteristics, field of study, and place of residence (1982, p. 182).

While it was not feasible in the HEOP study to undertake a longitudinal analysis of graduates, interviews and questionnaire responses indicated that students attending more selective institutions had lower attrition and were more likely to attend postgraduate programs. The quality of financial aid and ease of obtaining part-time work on campus enhanced retention among HEOP students. According to program directors, students were more likely to withdraw due to financial problems necessitating full-time employment than for academic reasons. Directors also concurred, as noted earlier, that grade point averages, high motivation, and strong career goals were more important predictors of academic success in college than standardized test scores.

In analyzing state data on student persistence, it is important to keep in mind that these students pursue a time-lengthened degree: five years for the baccalaureate and three years for the associate degree. More selective colleges with stringent admissions criteria and high per capita costs encourage graduation within four years. Cohort survival data show that of 1,617 entering freshmen in 1977-78, 30.7 percent of 496 graduated within four years, and another 13.6 percent within five years, a total of 44.3 percent statewide. Table 2 gives the total number of HEOP graduates as a percentage of total cumulative enrollments from 1977-78 to 1981-82.

Table 2: Percentage of HEOP Graduates to Total Enrollments, 1978-78 to 1981-82

Year	Enrollments	Graduates	Pct. Graduates To Enrollments
1981-2	31,537	7,413	23.5
1980-1	29,193	6,652	22.8
1979-80	27,248	5,957	21.9
1978-9	25,025	5,319	21.3
1977-8	22,653	4,633	20.5

Source: *HEOP Annual Report*, 1981-82.

In comparing the progress of freshman classes entering between 1975 and 1978, the persistence rate to graduation within five years declined from 63 percent (1979-80) to 44 percent (1981-82). The percentage graduating after four years declined by three percent, from 33 percent (1978-79) to 30 percent (1980-81). This is somewhat less than the national profile for all undergraduates. The American Council on Education found that four out of 10 students graduate within four years of entrance and another one out of 10 graduate from the same institution in five years, or about a fifty percent graduation rate (Jackley and Henderson, 1979). NCES data show that 44 percent of all young adults enter a four-year degree program, and 23 percent (or slightly more than fifty percent of those entering college) persist to graduation (1980).

The average course completion rate in the five years was 77 to 84 percent. However, in the freshman year, it ranged from a high of 66.9 percent in 1975-76 to a current low of 46.8 percent. The decline in completion rates during the first three semesters levels off in the fourth semester, and shows a gradual increase by the junior year. This is consistent with the fact that the highest attrition occurs during the freshman and sophomore years.

Student progress is measured by cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better. Students below this level are subject to probation or dismissal based on institutional academic standards. Slightly more than one-third typically fall below 2.0 with approximately 15 percent at 3.0 or better. The majority are in the B+ to B− range. There has been a decline in GPA's during the past ten years, particularly at 3.0 or above. In 1973-4, 18.4 percent of HEOP students received GPA's ranging from 3.0 to 4.0; in 1981-2 only 15.5 percent received similar scores. This should be a source of concern as standards are raised. In 1974-75, average GPA's were 24 percent compared to 15.5 percent in 1981-82. When compared to the fact that high school GPA's of incoming freshmen increased by nine percent in that time, the reason for the disparities needs to be analyzed further.

HEOP programs report annually on reasons for program separation in the following categories: academic dismissal or leave, financial, personal or medical problems. The average attrition for all HEOP students from 1975-76 to 1981-82 was 18.9 percent after one year and 37.7 percent after three years. In 1981-82, 25 percent left for various reasons. 1,178 took personal, financial, medical or academic leave; 240 transferred, usually to other opportunity programs at CUNY or SUNY. Directors cite lack of time to do follow-up studies of graduates as well as dropouts. Systematic follow-up studies would be valuable tools in determining which factors contribute most directly to student success, strengthening what works and eliminating or modifying what is no longer valid.

Improved student achievement has led to more positive attitudes among faculty and staff. Directors cited the most significant impact on staff (84 percent) and faculty (86 percent) with more moderate impact on non-HEOP students (67 percent). Some campuses now have HEOP student councils funded as regular student activities and serving to form a constituency in support of program continuance and to aid incoming HEOP students. Student achievement has been most affected in four areas: persistence to graduation, retention, higher GPA's, and positive self-concept. The impact on post-graduate study and careers has been more diffuse according to respondents.

Most frequent undergraduate majors were in business, social science, teacher education, psychology, health sciences, communications, fine and applied arts. The percentage of HEOP graduates seeking employment upon graduation increased from 48 to 54 percent in the past three years; those continuing to graduate and professional schools are about 20 percent. Barriers to participation in post-graduate study are financial and academic, paralleling access problems at the undergraduate level to some extent. Poor test-taking skills, language deficiencies, and cultural differences deter students from scoring well on standardized tests required for admission to law, medical, and business schools. Astin notes that both minority and white students majoring in natural science, engineering, and premedical curricula get lower grades that those majoring in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and education, attributing this to "more stringent" academic standards in science and engineering. He also notes a decrease in minority enrollments in pre-medical, pre-law, and engineering programs, exacerbating the problem of underrepresentation (1982, 182, 183). The scarcity of scholarship and fellowship money for graduate study combined with college GPA's that are not sufficiently competitive underscore the problem for minority students.

Directors were asked to list the three major concerns which policy makers should be addressing in the 1980s to maintain and improve education for disadvantaged students. The six most frequent responses and the number sharing this view are given below:

- Adequate financial aid and higher funding levels for opportunity programs (23)
- Greater statewide visibility and societal support for access and opportunity programs and policies (11)
- Better trained professional staff to advise, tutor, and teach disadvantaged students (12)
- Improved access to undergraduate, professional and technical schools and to the job market (11)

- Strengthened academic support services for HEOP students (10) including computer literacy (6)
- Earlier identification of high school sophomores and juniors (4)

Impact on Budgets

External support has been the "crucial legitimizer" in carrying out opportunity program goals of HEOP and other such programs (Peterson, 1978). In 1981-82, $30.5 million was appropriated in direct support of all state opportunity programs, an increase of $5.1 million or twenty percent over the prior year. HEOP has grown from $4 million in 1970 serving 3,520 students to $11.5 million in 1982-83. It is an income-producing program. In 1981-82, revenues were $56.5 million from combined state, federal, and institutional sources (62 percent federal, 19 percent each state and institutional).

TAP has had the greatest impact on the amount of direct student aid among state sources. While it enabled HEOP programs to redirect funds to expand supportive services, an annual increase of twelve percent in the cost of college attendance in HEOP two and four-year colleges (compared to five to eight percent in other opportunity programs) has resulted in cutbacks in HEOP budgets, greater institutional commitment (up three percent from last year) and more student loans. If SEOG, NDSL, and GSL sources are reduced in 1984, the aid gap will become more critical. Most HEOP students qualify for maximum TAP and Pell grants, $2,200 and $1,800 respectively. In 1981-82, more than sixty percent had family incomes below $6,448, the lowest category on the eligibility scale.

In 1981-82, total aid for HEOP students included $10.9 million in HEOP aid, $11 million in institutional support, and $34.5 million in federal and state grants and loans, or $9,399 per student. This is graphic proof that HEOP students bring in sizable amounts of revenues through financial aid.

Findings and Conclusions

To move beyond the rhetoric of "full opportunity" and programs for the "disadvantaged," several problems need to be resolved. HEOP has achieved much in opening access to private colleges and universities in the state, in launching minority colleges in New York City, and in providing a framework for implementing a number of services for students with economic and educational handicaps. Its clarity of mission and well-defined student population enhanced its capability to design and conduct new programs for underprepared students. It legitimized access and opportunity as concepts through which subsequent policies were also formulated for direct student aid and other need-based and remedial programs. It caused institutions to rethink and revise existing policies on admissions, curriculum, student services, retention, counseling, and staffing. It created a new category of student called "disadvantaged" and over time, continually modified that definition in response to environmental changes and new state priorities (the new 1983 guidelines include "handicapped" students in the expanded HEOP target population).

Outside the universities, it heightened awareness among school officials and high school students regarding the availability of compensatory programs and financial aid through HEOP and other opportunity programs, altering the tracking of less able students into community colleges and vocational schools. It reduced the stigma of developmental studies, personal counseling, and remedial courses, adopting procedures for improving articulation with schools and assimilating disadvantaged "high risk" students into the college mainstream.

It made campus financial aid offices more efficient and imaginative in coordinating federal, state, and institutional funding sources with positive results for students and college budgets. To a lesser degree, it improved access for minority students to graduate and professional schools and to better entry-level jobs in underrepresented fields such as engineering, science, and business.

Problem areas which remain to be resolved include 1) sustaining the commitment to low-income youth and out-of-school adults in a time of retrenchment; 2) increasing access for minority students who are victims of the same barriers to admission at the graduate as at the undergraduate level, i.e., standardized tests, grade point averages, and financial aid; 3) the negative impact of raising academic standards for college admission, now becoming a national trend in public and private universities and colleges; 4) the problems of "new" ethnic groups whose language deficiencies and cultural distinctions necessitate further revision of programs and services for opportunity program students; 5) the lack of follow-up on alumni to determine how they progress after four years of HEOP; 6) improving the quality of HEOP programs to focus on retention, grade point averages, English as a Second Language courses, cohort survival rates, and overall program effectiveness in meeting stated objectives; and 7) cutbacks in federal and state aid which threaten to abrogate a wide range of services, training, and academic opportunities for the poor. With these and other problem areas in mind, several recommendations are proposed as an outcome of this study.

An Agenda For the Future

The future agenda may be subtitled "surviving the eighties." These recommendations are made in response to the issues raised in the previous section and based on an assessment of HEOP's impact to date.

1. Continued funding of opportunity programs is essential to provide more effective services for improving retention and performance of disadvantaged students. If universities are to become multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-racial communities, consideration should be given to institutionalizing supportive services such as learning centers, counseling and tutoring, increasing their cost effectiveness and gaining for them greater faculty acceptance. Improved retention rates should also be an institutional function based on assessment of data showing continued high attrition among *all* categories of students. We have treated very casually, it seems, the fact that half of all students entering a four-year degree program do not graduate, and this problem needs to be addressed with greater deliberation in the future.

2. Efforts should be made to replicate what works with emphasis on programs and services that improve achievement. Because HEOP programs are small and self-contained, they can be studied more easily than large, complex hierarchical institutions in which they reside. Some characteristics that can be examined more closely are the informality, flexibility, and student-centeredness of HEOP programs which differ in kind and degree from the "mother" institution with its multiple missions, diverse student populations, and faculty-centered communities. The importance of immediate feedback in problem resolution, supportive services to reinforce learning, sense of program ownership by staff and students, strong emphasis on setting goals for academic progress and evaluating these on a regular basis, clarity of mission, shared staff responsibilities—all of these factors are cited as demonstrable to some degree in HEOP. These programs should be viewed as alternative models or mini-schools which can be strengthened through more widespread recognition of their positive impact.

3. More systematic efforts are needed to work with public schools in improving preparation for college. As academic standards are raised for admission and continuation in college, the net effect is to reduce access for applicants who cannot meet these criteria without special help. Earlier intervention programs are needed to improve public education for poor minority students before compensatory programs are needed. The urgency of this problem is reflected in the high dropout rate of Black and Hispanic students, 28 and 45 percent respectively (Astin, 1982, p. 174). Influential educational organizations such as the American Educational Research Association should turn their attention toward improvement of urban schools as well as special minority programs as key factors in equalizing educational opportunity.

4. We can learn from the literature on instructionally effective schools. In his evaluations of IES, Edmonds cited the importance of leadership, school environment, teacher performance, student assessment, and instruction in basic skills (*Educational Leadership*, 1979). He found that no single model explained school effectiveness for the poor or any other social class subset, but that a variety of instructional strategies seem to work in different environments and leadership modes. "Effective schools are eager to avoid things that don't work as they are committed to implementing things that do." This observation can be applied to HEOP, one model (but not the only one) that has been shaped over twelve years of implementation in seventy institutions ranging from Cornell and Columbia Universities and Rochester Institute of Technology to Malcolm-King and Boricua Colleges in New York City. HEOP's impact can be communicated to educators, and its importance weighed as public policy modification is debated in the political arena.

5. The lack of follow-up data on HEOP alumni should be remedied. Questionnaires and follow-up studies are lacking on what happens to graduates when they attend graduate and professional schools, how well they do, the problems they encounter, and even how many apply and are not admitted and why. For those entering the job market, what is the economic impact of HEOP on their ability to get better jobs? For older, married students, what has been the impact on the quality of their lives, including home, job and aspirations for self and children? While anecdotal data are available through interviews with directors and students, a systematic documentation is called for.

6. Faculty development efforts should include in-service progams to improve skills in advisement and instruction of disadvantaged students. Rather than rely on adjuncts to teach developmental courses, funds should be made available to retrain underutilized personnel for participation in HEOP and to reduce staff turnover among HEOP personnel. Emphasis should be given to work with nontraditional adults and high risk students.

7. A graduate HEOP program should be explored to resolve problems of access and equity in admission to professional and graduate schools. The American Council on Education seminar pointed out that "graduate and professional schools remain overwhelmingly white," and traditionally Black institutions still produce the majority of baccalaureate and post-graduate degree recipients who are Black (Egerton, 1982, p. 19). The same or similar barriers to minority participation exist at the advanced degree level, that is, standardized tests such as the LSAT, GRE, and MCAT; college GPA's below 3.0; a lack of financial aid and reliance on loans; housing; linguistic deficiencies; lack of counseling services; family responsibilties during years of advanced study; placement of minority students in prestigious career

paths in business, law, and college teaching. We can no longer assume that all students should be able to compete in graduate and professional schools at the same level of performance, and that individual differences are a disadvantage to those who do not measure up to national standards.

8. Most research on minorities in postsecondary (and pre-college) education has focused on Blacks and Hispanics. More is needed on Asian students, including recognition of the cultural distinction within this cohort. The rapid increase of Asian students (in New York City, the Asian population has grown 200 percent in ten years), requires greater attention to instruction in communication skills, bilingual education, and reading. Because of the ways in which demographic data are collected, we group different cultural groups together for statistical purposes. In providing services responsive to individual student needs, this approach needs evaluation. Perhaps we need new modes of ESL, more learning resource centers, better developmental course sequences, and different evaluation tools. Dialogues now in progress between universities and high schools should include programs for disadvantaged children and youth as a top priority.

In summary, HEOP has graduated more than 8,000 students since its inception. It has given extensive services ranging from pre-freshman summer courses to counseling and remediation to those requiring supplemental programs. It has evaluated programs and student achievement on an annual basis, making recommendations for improvement and change, and offering the resources to carry out these recommendations. It has revised the definition of disadvantaged to include more diverse target populations. The diligent efforts of HEOP staff members have paid off in increased retention and graduation rates and improved student services. Each year, more than 60 percent obtain GPA's of 2.0 or better; almost 20 percent continue in graduate and professional schools; 44 percent graduate, a decline from prior years but not very different from the national college population data.

HEOP's services are now offered through other kinds of state-funded or institutional programs, offering low-income, under-prepared men and women the chance to work toward a college degree in some highly selective universities. Heightened awareness of its success as well as some of the problems and issues which warrant discussion and resolution will strengthen HEOP and enhance its impact as a major outreach strategy, particularly in urban education. In today's climate of cutback, constraint, and competition for reduced resources, the positive outcomes of opportunity programs should be stated strongly if we are to achieve equity of results in higher education.

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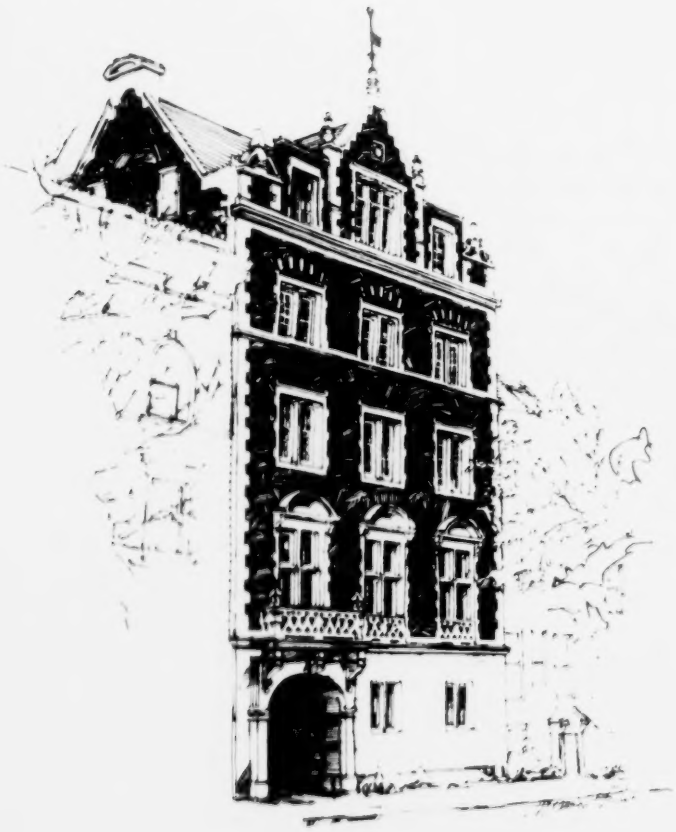

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